

Four to One: Gallbladder Surgery Becomes Less Invasive

The pain has been described as excruciating, a stabbing sensation that causes you to double over in pain. The culprit could be gallstones. Each year over 500,000 gallbladder surgeries are performed in this country, and the most common reason is gallstones.

Women are twice as likely to suffer from gallstones. Just ask Cali Cobb, a 24-year-old wife of a chaplain's assistant in the United States Army, about the pain of a gallbladder attack. She discovered she had gallstones when she was pregnant last year with her son, Landon.

"My primary care doctor told me that I needed to get my gallbladder out," says Mrs. Cobb. "I was scheduled for surgery in October but I ended up having a gallstone attack that resulted in a trip to the ER. I was in *excruciating pain*. It feels like someone is kicking you in the ribs on your right side."

Mrs. Cobb was fortunate to have been referred to Dr. Sung B. Kim, a board certified surgeon trained in the new SILS™ (single incision laparoscopic surgery) procedure. SILS™ is a minimally invasive surgical procedure that involves a single 20 mm incision through the belly button to remove the gallbladder. The single incision as opposed to the four ½-inch or smaller incisions associated with traditional laparoscopic surgery minimizes the pain that may result with the additional incisions.

"Dr. Kim was very understanding and thorough," said Mrs. Cobb. "He explained everything to me before the surgery. This helped calm me down because I was extremely nervous about the procedure."

If there are no complications following the surgery, as was the case for Mrs. Cobb, patients can be discharged and go home the same day. "I was *not at all incapacitated* by the surgery," she said. "The procedure lasted less than an hour. Now it doesn't even feel like I ever had a problem or had my gallbladder removed."

Dr. Kim is currently the only general surgeon in the Harford County area that performs the SILS™ gallbladder removal surgery. Specializing in minimally invasive surgery, he is part of the Upper Chesapeake Surgical Associates practice based in Havre de Grace.



For more information about the SILS™ procedure, call Dr. Kim, Upper Chesapeake Surgical Associates, (410) 939-0700.